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EDITOR'S NOTE--IN A HOUSE SPEECH YESTERDAY REP. GEORGE MAHON, D-TEX., DECLARED EXCESSIVE TALK ABOUT U.S. INTELLIGENCE SECRETS IS "MAKING US THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE WORLD." THE IMPACT OF THAT DECLARATION IS DETAILED IN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE.

BY FRANK CORMIER

WASHINGTON, MARCH 8 (AP)--REP. MAHON'S PLEA THAT PUBLIC OFFICIALS KEEP QUIET ABOUT AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES WAS WELCOME NEWS TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY, AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AGREED "SILENCE IS GOLDEN."

THE PRESIDENT, IT WAS LEARNED TODAY, WAS IMMENSELY PLEASED WHEN AIDES SHOWED HIM NEWS WIRE ACCOUNTS OF THE TEXAS DEMOCRAT'S SPEECH YESTERDAY ON THE HOUSE FLOOR. THERE WAS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE KENNEDY BEGAN MAKING PLANS TO GRAB THE BALL MAHON TOSSED INTO THE AIR.

WHITE HOUSE SOURCES SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONGRESSMAN ACTED ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE, THAT KENNEDY HAD NO FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE BLISTERING ATTACK ON LOOSE TALK.

MAHON, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE, SAID "OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW, PEKING AND HAVANA MUST APPLAUD OUR STUPIDITY IN ANNOUNCING PUBLICLY FACTS WHICH THEY WOULD GLADLY SPEND HUGE SUMS OF MONEY ENDEAVORING TO OBTAIN."

HE GAVE NO SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND SAID THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE LEGISLATIVE, REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ALIKE, "MUST SHARE THE BLAME" FOR "MAKING US THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE WORLD."

THERE WAS AN IMMEDIATE CHORUS OF AMENS ON CAPITOL HILL.

(EDITORS: THE FOLLOWING 4 GRAS ARE EMBARGOED FOR THE USE AT 6:30 A.M. EST)

AT THE SAME TIME, REP. BOB WILSON, R-CALIF, SAID HE HAD CALLED ON SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. MCNAMARA TO TELL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHETHER SOVIET SHIPS RECENTLY REPORTED EN ROUTE TO CUBA TO REMOVE RUSSIAN TROOPS ACTUALLY WERE CARRYING MISSILES TO THE ISLAND.

IN A NEWS RELEASE FROM HIS OFFICE, WILSON SAID HE HAD SENT A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY POSING THESE QUESTIONS:

"HOW MANY SHIPS HAVE ACTUALLY ARRIVED IN CUBAN PORTS OSTENSIBLY TO RETURN SOVIET SOLDIERS? HAVE OUR INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING SERVICES CHECKED THE UNLOADING OF THESE VESSELS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY CARRIED MISSILES INTO CUBA? HOW MANY RUSSIANS HAVE LEFT CUBA?"

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WILSON'S LETTER CONTINUED: "SINCE THE COMMUNISTS OBVIOUSLY ARE AWARE OF THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS, I CAN SEE NO REASON TO WITHHOLD THE SAME INFORMATION FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC."

(EDITORS: END EMBARGOED MATTER)

IN EXPRESSING AGREEMENT WITH MAHON, SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER MIKE MANSFIELD OF MONTANA SAID: "I FEEL THAT THERE'S TOO MUCH INTELLIGENCE GIVEN OUT." AND SEN. HENRY M. JACKSON, D-WASH., TOLD A REPORTER: "ALL SHOULD HEED THE ADMONITION THAT SILENCE IS THE GOLDEN RULE OF INTELLIGENCE."

ON THE HOUSE SIDE, MAHON'S ASSERTION THAT "THE PRESENT SITUATION IS OUTRAGEOUS AND INTOLERABLE" BROUGHT A BIPARTISAN PLEA TO TRY TO STOP THE TONGUE-WAGGING AS FAR AS CONGRESS IS CONCERNED.

"I HOPE THAT DURING THESE CONFUSED TIMES MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WILL BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT THEY SAY," SAID REP. FRANCES P. BOLTON OF OHIO, TOP REPUBLICAN ON THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

"WE MUST EXERCISE DISCRETION IN THESE MATTERS," SAID REP. BEN. F. JENSEN OF IOWA, SENIOR REPUBLICAN ON THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. "NONE OF US SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR GIVING AID AND COMFORT TO THE COMMUNISTS BY LOOSE TALK."

LIKE MAHON, MRS. BOLTON AND JENSEN ARE ON COMMITTEES WHICH RECEIVE MUCH CLASSIFIED AND TOP-SECRET INFORMATION ABOUT INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

IN ADDITION TO THESE AFFIRMATIONS OF APPROVAL, ASSISTANT SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER HUBERT H. HUMPHREY OF MINNESOTA SUGGESTED IN A SENATE SPEECH THAT A NEW JOINT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS BE ESTABLISHED WITH LEGISLATIVE JURISDICTION OVER ALL GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES.

AND REP. PAUL ROGERS, D-FLA., CALLED FOR ADOPTION OF HIS RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A SENATE-HOUSE COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND SIMILAR GROUPS.

IN HIS SPEECH, MAHON CALLED ON KENNEDY, VICE PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON AND HOUSE SPEAKER JOHN MCCORMACK, D-MASS., TO "COORDINATE A COURSE OF ACTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF HALTING THE RAPID EROSION OF OUR NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE EFFORT."

"TODAY'S HEADLINES MAY COST THE LIVES OF THE HUMAN SOURCES OF INFORMATION," MAHON SAID. "THE ENEMY CAN FIND OUR INTELLIGENCE SOURCES MUCH MORE EASILY WHEN HE KNOWS WHAT WE HAVE FOUND OUT. THIS KNOWLEDGE HELPS TO PINPOINT THE LOCATION OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES, AND ONCE KNOWING THE LOCATION, THE DISCOVERY OF THE MEANS IS MUCH EASIER AND INTELLIGENCE SOURCES DRY UP."

THE ADMINISTRATION'S INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION TO MAHON'S SPEECH WAS NOT EXPECTED TO COME FROM KENNEDY. WHILE THIS COULD NOT BE RULED OUT, IT SEEMED MORE LIKELY THAT SOME OTHER HIGH OFFICIAL WOULD BE THE FIRST TO APPLAUD THE TEXAN'S DECLARATION.

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--VARIOUS ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT, BECAUSE THIS IS A DEMOCRACY WHERE GOVERNMENT SECRETS ARE SUSPECT, THERE IS A TENDENCY TO MAKE PUBLIC TOO MUCH INFORMATION THAT COULD BE HELPFUL TO A POTENTIAL ENEMY.

--ANY CURBING OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES MIGHT SERVE TO QUIET THE CONTINUING CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS INVOLVING SOVIET MOVES IN CUBA.

IN ADDITION, THE ADMINISTRATION MIGHT USE MAHON'S SPEECH AS A NEW LEVER TO EMPLOY IN DISCOURAGING GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES FROM GIVING CERTAIN KINDS OF INFORMATION TO NEWSMEN.

AT THE TIME OF THE CUBAN CRISIS, BOTH THE DEFENSE AND STATE DEPARTMENTS ISSUED DIRECTIVES AIMED AT THIS OBJECTIVE. ALTHOUGH BOTH DEPARTMENTS ACTED IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL SECURITY, IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THEIR ORDERS EVER WERE AS EFFECTIVE AS INTENDED.

MAHON SAID THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION "HAS MISTAKENLY ALLOWED ITSELF TO BE GOADED INTO REVEALING INFORMATION DETRIMENTAL TO OUR BEST INTERESTS."

THE REMARK RECALLED THE UNEASINESS KENNEDY EXPRESSED AT A NEWS CONFERENCE FEB. 7, THE DAY AFTER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. MCNAMARA AND AN AIDE CONDUCTED AN UNPRECEDENTED, TELEVISED DISPLAY OF RECONNAISSANCE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CUBAN ARMS BUILDUP.

REITERATING THE ADMINISTRATION POSITION THAT CUBA WAS NOW FREE OF OFFENSIVE WEAPONS, KENNEDY SAID AT THAT TIME:

"I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING AND NOT COMPEL, BECAUSE OF THESE VARIOUS RUMORS AND SPECULATIONS, COMPEL THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO GO ON TELEVISION FOR TWO HOURS TO TRY TO GET THE TRUTH TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND IN THE COURSE OF IT, HAVE TO GIVE A GOOD DEAL OF INFORMATION WHICH WE ARE RATHER RELUCTANT TO GIVE ABOUT OUR INTELLIGENCE GATHERING FACILITIES."

IN A SEPARATE INTERVIEW, SEN. KENNETH B. KEATING, R-N.Y., WHO IN THE PAST REPEATEDLY CHARGED THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION WITH UNDERSTATING THE EXTENT OF THE CUBAN ARMS BUILDUP, SAID: "ANY STEPS NECESSARY TO PROTECT OUR NATIONAL SECURITY WILL HAVE MY SUPPORT. ANY ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS INFORMATION SIMPLY TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DESERVES NO SUCH CONSIDERATION."

KEATING CONTINUED: "THE BASIC ISSUE IN THE DEBATE ON SOVIET CUBA IS NOT OVER OUR INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM BUT WITH REGARD TO WHAT POLICIES WE SHOULD ADOPT TO MEET THE COMMUNIST THREAT IN THIS HEMISPHERE. WE NEED THE FACTS TO DETERMINE A POLICY, BUT WE DON'T NEED TO COMPROMISE INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE."

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